



**City of Freeport**  
**SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING**  
6:00 p.m./Council Chambers/Freeport City Hall  
October 21, 2019 Minutes

**I. Meeting Called to Order**

The October 21, 2019 Special Council Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Councilman Eddie Farris. The meeting was held in the City Council Chambers of Freeport City Hall.

Council Members present: Councilwoman Amanda Green, Councilwoman Elizabeth Brannon, Councilman Eddie Farris, Councilman William “Boots” McCormick.

Council absent: Mayor Russ Barley, Councilwoman Elizabeth Haffner.

Staff present: City Attorney Clay Adkinson, City Engineer Cliff Knauer and Clerk Assistant Lori Cox.

**II. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**

The Invocation was given by Councilman Farris, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

**III. Inter Local Agreement – Bear Creek**

Councilman Farris turned the meeting over to City Attorney Clay Adkinson who gave the introduction to the meeting. Adkinson explained that the City of Freeport was awarded an \$850,000 grant by the State of Florida for a Florida Department of Transportation project allocated to Bear Creek Bridge on Bay Loop Rd. The City has debated turning over the project to Walton County to perform the work on the bridge through an Interlocal Agreement. The City Engineers met with county authorities to discuss taking over the project. The County provided an Interlocal Agreement for the City of Freeport’s consideration. Adkinson reviewed the Interlocal Agreement to form and was prepared to answer Council questions. Adkinson requested that City Engineer Cliff Knauer discuss the project and implications.

Cliff Knauer approached the podium and addressed the Council.

- Knauer stated that Councilwoman Amanda Green was designated by the Freeport City Council to represent the City at the County Commission meeting regarding Bear Creek Bridge. Discussions among parties led to the County Commissioners agreeing to take over the grant and to use in house engineers for design and CEI.
- Larry Jones, representative for Walton County, was authorized to negotiate the agreement with the City through Councilwoman Green. Mr. Jones sent a draft agreement to City Engineer Knauer. The draft agreement stated the County would agree to take over the grant and use their in-house forces for design, CEI and to oversee the construction management of the project. The draft Interlocal Agreement stated that anything in excess of the \$850,000 construction costs would be split between the County and the City of Freeport.



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- Knauer stated that since the project is connected to the Choctawhatchee Bay, DEP and Army Corps permits will be required. Knauer feels that the contract would work out for both the County and City to budget accordingly for due to lengthy permitting time frames estimated at 6-8 months. The project could be put out for bid in order to have more of an accurate account of actual costs involved prior to budget. Knauer estimated worst case scenario for City of Freeport and Walton County to be out \$25,000 each above project estimation. He believed that both parties would benefit from the project.
- Councilman Farris asked Councilwoman Green if there was anything she would like to add since she had attended the meeting.
- Councilwoman Green stated that County representatives initially had concerns as to how the bridge ended up on the City of Freeport appropriation list. She believed they understood and felt comfortable knowing that the addition to the appropriation list was an honest mistake. She believed the County seemed very willing to work with the City of Freeport and didn't want to lose the appropriation. Conversations led to the creation of an interlocal agreement.
- Councilman Farris stated concerns with the draft agreement not capping a limit on overage costs. Farris and asked Knauer if he thought it would go higher than the \$25,000.
- Knauer stated that he did not believe the overage amount would go higher than \$25,000.
- Councilwoman Green stated she expressed her concerns to County Representative, Larry Jones, that the agreement did not have a cap on the overage amount. She preferred adding verbiage, "not to exceed" to the interlocal. If costs exceeded beyond that point, then the City could renegotiate with the County once the design process has been completed.
- Councilman Farris stated that the public also had concerns that the draft agreement had no mention of an overage cap and could potentially affect next year's budget.
- City Attorney Adkinson asked Knauer if the bridge design could change the scope of the project.
- Knauer stated that the bridge style is a prefabricated bridge and is the same type of bridge that the county has built within the last 10-15 years. The prefabricated bridge was the type applied for and is the type he was professing to use.
- Adkinson expressed concerns with the County selecting someone for the project that does not build prefabricated bridges then asked Knauer if that would change the scope of the project.
- Knauer felt that a bidder would have to build the type of bridge that was applied for with FDOT.
- Discussion ensued among Council, City Attorney and City Engineer regarding the design clause within the agreement and the potential overage amount that the City could potentially have to incur. Council remained concerned with overage costs.
- Knauer stated that he had two bridge contractors that build bridges within Walton County look at the project and both would put the project within budget. The collective \$50,000 he is suggesting is a worst-case scenario and is over the budget that was given to him.





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- Councilman McCormick expressed his trust in the City Engineers expertise and knowledge of the project and suggested using the Engineers collective \$50,000 figure as a reference to overage costs.

*Council Action: Councilwoman Brannon motioned to accept the Interlocal Agreement with the added clause "not to exceed a total payment of \$25,000" to page 2, paragraph 2, second sentence. Councilman McCormick seconded the motion. After debate and amendment, the following motion was adopted: To accept the Interlocal Agreement with the added clause "not to exceed a total payment of \$50,000" to page 2, paragraph 2, second sentence. All ayes; motion carried.*


**IV. Adjournment**

Councilman Farris adjourned the meeting at 6:19 p.m.

CITY OF FREEPORT

  
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Mayor

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk Assistant